

Washington, DC – Today, Congressman Earl Blumenauer issued the following statement in response to passage in the House Ways and Means Committee of H.R. 1232, a bill that bars lower income families and small businesses from using premium assistance and tax credits provided in the Affordable Care Act from purchasing healthcare that includes coverage of reproductive health. The legislation, however, does allow larger businesses and wealthier families to continue purchasing such health coverage:

“This legislation represents an unfortunate extension of the ideological assault on freedom for American families. It is sad that some people continue to aggressively work to restrict access to constitutionally protected reproductive health rights.

“This legislation is particularly hypocritical and unfair. It says that we will use tax increases as a club against middle and lower-middle class individuals and small businesses. In effect, what Republicans say in this legislation is that, as long as the overall tax collection level is affected only minimally, it doesn't matter that there will be significant tax increases for particular individuals and for small businesses. This is rank hypocrisy, since they do not have the courage to raise taxes on upper income Americans or interfere with the health plans of big business.

“The hearing clearly established that small businesses will face compliance problems, because there are grey areas about what could, in fact, be subject to these tax provisions. It also sets an unfortunate precedent that will potentially bog down the Ways and Means Committee for years, with rifle-shot efforts applied within various tax deductions to wage ideological wars against types of medical research or facilities or other legitimate individual and business tax expenses

“This is a bad precedent for the committee. It will lead to many unfortunate results and further removes us from the important work of strengthening America's economy and renewing and rebuilding our communities.”